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THE GENIUS OF ENGLAND

BY HAVELOCK ELLIS

THE English are not only, as has often been observed, the most individual of people, but England is also the most individual of nations. That is the natural result of the peculiar position of England as a citadel in the sea. At the outset, the strong and adventurous alone might dare to approach the forbidding shores of this island, to seize and to hold it. A process of selection was thus exercised on all would-be invaders. Only the men of vigorous and original individuality could be tempted to this hazardous enterprise across the waves, only such men could overcome the risks of this dangerous coast and achieve success in their daring task.

When once the island was peopled by a strong race its qualities as a citadel could be utilized. For a thousand years there has been no great hostile invasion of England. The various bands of daring adventurers who seized the land, once firmly welded together, have been free to develop their native characteristics as individualistic sea-faring adventurers, and on that basis to elaborate their culture and display their special genius.

Many of the most marked and the most discrepant traits of the Englishman are accounted for when we bear in mind that he is thus the outcome of a special, perhaps unique, process of selection. That process has made him adventurer and pirate, dreamer and poet, passionately devoted to freedom, independent to the verge of eccentricity, resourceful and versatile, not only a stern moralist peculiarly apt for piety but an aggressive colonizer and a hard-headed, practical man of business. It is necessary to emphasize this factor in the causation of the Englishman because it seems usually to be overlooked.

At the same time we need by no means neglect the influ-

ence of race in the making of the English. The races that have their part in the British nation are so various, and the persistence of their characteristics are so visible even to-day, that the crudest theorist in England finds himself invoking the racial factor to explain any puzzling trait in his fellow countrymen.

Roughly speaking, the earlier invasions were of dark peoples and the later invasions of fair peoples. The result has been that, notwithstanding the high degree of amalgamation which has been taking place from the first, the west side of Britain holds a population which is largely of dark pigmentation, while the population of the east side is almost throughout of light pigmentation. These external differences in appearance are associated with equally marked internal differences in temperament. Thus the whole country constitutes a kind of electric battery with an eastern pole and a western pole, whereby a continuous circulation of energy takes place, the two unlike elements forever stimulating, reinforcing, and moderating each other. So are formed vital currents which have often produced friction, and yet largely served to generate the vigor of the English people.

When we come to analyze more specifically the racial elements which make up the two poles of this battery, and to consider what special qualities they may have contributed, apart from the selective process of the sea, to the constitution of the English nation, we are somewhat in doubt as to the earliest recognizable element. We may be certain that it was largely dark, we may assume that it had its chief home in the Mediterranean, and we may choose to call it Iberian, bearing in mind always the influence of the selectional process which has to some extent modified the original character of all the invaders of Britain. This element, combined with more rugged elements of obscure origin, has become closely united with the second main body of invaders, the Goidels followed by the Brythons and both Celts, these uniting with the earlier elements to constitute together what we now commonly call the "Celtic" population of Britain. It is evident, however, that the stocks of earlier arrival than the Goidels and Brythons must count for much; for they imparted to the Celtic blood not only its dark complexion and its robust constitution, but also its stubborn tenacity, its obstinate independence,—unchangeable even beneath the mask of a gracious suavity,—for these are qualities altogether unlike

those of the Gallic Celts whom Strabo has described so well, receptive, versatile, and unstable. The Belgae, however, the modern Walloons of Southern Belgium, form the natural links between the Celts of France and of Britain. When one is among the people of Liège and the neighborhood one has more the sense of being among people with the special air and carriage of the English than in perhaps any other region of the opposite coast.

The well combined product of these early waves of invasion—all later admixtures in the West being subordinate—which we are pleased to call “Celtic” constitutes a permanent and clearly marked element in the collective whole of “England.” These people possess a natural distinction, an inborn refinement, quite independent of material civilization—the Irish, even of high social class, as Fynes Moryson bore witness, sometimes dispensed with clothing as late as the seventeenth century—which often stamped their features and is marked in their gracious carriage and courteous speech. This is found in every division of the Celtic race in Britain, however variously modified, alike in Ireland and the Scotch Highlands, in Wales and in Cornwall. It seems to testify to the undoubted fact that these people have behind them a much more ancient culture than the later English. They are of alert intelligence and quick wit, democratic in their instincts, ready of response to the appeal of the ideal, impassioned orators, imaginative in vision and impetuous in action, yet with a certain coolness, sometimes even hardness of temperament, which often seems to preserve them from their own excessiveness, and enables them indeed to mock at the excessiveness of others, for they seem too emotional themselves to overrate the value of emotion. The vivacity of their nerves makes them not only dreamers and idealists but apt also for action, and even too readily fighters. In all these respects the Celtic side of Britain has an individuality of its own which distinguishes it from the Eastern side in which the elements brought by later waves of invasion remain predominant.

The “Anglo-Saxon” wave furnished what is usually considered to be the Germanic element in the English. Strictly speaking, this came, according to the best modern opinions, from the south of Denmark and the adjoining region still further south and to the west. It was made up of two or three tribes, the Angles, who seem to have come

from Angel in Schleswig, and the Jutes, probably from Jutland, and the Saxons, from the region immediately to the south of Denmark, not identical with modern Saxony, so that we must not too hastily assume that it is from a sense of blood-relationship that even in the Great War of today there has been more good feeling between the English and the Saxons than with any of the other German peoples to whom the English have been opposed. On the whole this invasion was that of a Low German population, with Scandinavian affinities. The Frisians who occupied, and still occupy, the north west corner of Continental Europe, seem to have been almost identical with the Saxons, and the language which they speak in Dutch Friesland is nearer to English than any other tongue. The Englishman of to-day can easily understand Frisian, even fragments of Flemish, but the High German tongue has left no marks on England. The High Germans, indeed, were too far east to be attracted to England. They were a vigorous, war-like, migratory race, but the great sweeps of their migrations usually curved in a southerly or southwesterly direction, traversing Italy and Spain and even Eastern France, but not expanding further towards the west. Of the tribes invading England, the Jutes had various customs of their own which they brought with them to Kent, but the Angles and the Saxons seem much more closely related, in the opinion of some authorities even identical, and it has been argued that the term "Anglo-Saxon" may simply mean "English Saxons."

This Anglo-Saxon invasion was an eruption of savage warriors into a peaceful and civilized population. For we must remember that for centuries the Romans had been in possession, and though we cannot say that the Roman armies made any recognizable contribution to the composition of the British population—for they had long ceased to be recruited mainly in Rome—yet Roman civilization, Roman organization, Roman luxury had permeated Britain. These invaders from Denmark had hitherto come into but slight contact with Roman influences which had no meaning for them. When they had hewed their way through with fire and the sword, they allowed the beautiful refinements of the Roman villas to fall into decay, until concealed by the grass-land under which we find them to-day, and built their own wooden settlements outside. This wave of invasion thus marked a great gulf in the culture of Britain, and that accounts for

the contrast between East and West which all the leveling influence of a thousand years have not effaced to-day.

The Anglo-Saxons extinguished civilization in Britain, although they brought with them a culture of their own which has sometimes been underrated. They constituted, moreover, an element which was destined to be of high value in the final development of the English nation. It is true that early historians have sometimes unduly magnified the part of the Anglo-Saxons in England; they have failed to realize the immense importance alike of the earlier and the later invasions; an England that was all Anglo-Saxon could scarcely have hoped for a larger career in the world than Saxony or Friesland, or so large a career as Scandinavian Denmark. But all the Germanic tribes have possessed, as Ferrero has pointed out, the precious aptitude to act as a cement to other racial stocks, binding together elements which have sometimes been of higher qualities than themselves. They were probably not democratic in the communal or clannish way of the early British, or the individualistic way of the later invaders; like all the Germans, they cultivated caste distinctions, the violation of which was punishable by death. This caste feeling still flourished even when the Anglo-Saxon was overlaid by new waves of invasion. It has so come about that the Anglo-Saxons constitute the solid, persistent plebeian element of the English population; this is expressed even in physical type, and the heavy peasant of a Saxon focus like Surrey and Sussex shows nothing of the distinction of the Highlander or the Cornishman, while these predominantly Saxon regions have produced the minimum proportion of English genius. The Anglo-Saxon has ever possessed a sturdy obstinacy, an independent commonsense, well typified by the South Saxon peasant, William Cobbett. Though "terrible for bravery and agility" the Saxons were fundamentally conservative from the first, the least apt to wander of all Germanic tribes, and in the great Germanic migrations of the early centuries after Christ, Saxons and Frisians and Angles still clung to their old ground on the bank of the Elbe. It is, perhaps, not an accident after all, that England has been named from the Anglo-Saxon. He has not been her brain, but he has perhaps been her backbone, even in an almost literal sense, for the most unmixed Anglo-Saxons run right down the center of the land, between the earlier British whom they rolled back to the coast, and the

later North-men who have encroached on the Eastern shores. Without the Anglo-Saxon England would be impotent; in every conflict of war, in every task of peace, he has been the weapon and the implement.

Before the English people became finally blended and tempered, it seems to have been the fate of each successive invasion to pass through a phase of enervation in this soft mild atmosphere and thus to yield to the onset of the next wave. This happened to the Anglo-Saxons, they lost their sea-power, without being able to transmute it into an effective land power. So they were often helpless before the new generation of Scandinavian pirates who carried out the same methods in an even more vigorous and relentless way. They were not only highly selected invaders,—for they came from far to attack a firmly settled land, and only the stoutest could hope for success,—but they belonged at the outset to the most individualized of the invaders of these islands. In complexion they were the fairest of all, and in character the most enterprising, the most self-reliant, in their extreme types the most gloomy and the most eccentric. They have left today their distinguishable mark all around the northern coast and the outlying islands. In place-names and family-names, in color of skin and eyes and hair, in traits of speech and character, the Danes thus remain in Norfolk and in Lincolnshire and in Durham and in Cumberland and in Furness, thickly on the coast and islands of Scotland, and sprinkled on the shores of Ireland. It can scarcely be a mere coincidence that it is in the Danish regions of England that I have most frequently met that John Bull who is supposed to be the typical Englishman. He is fair and high-colored, large of stature, of fleshy texture and rounded outlines, with not seldom the anxious mark on his face of his own physical weight, a little irritable, if not suspicious and defiant, though tender and emotional beneath, and sometimes he may be merely bucolic and sometimes he has the high intelligence and character, the gravity and firm decision of the finest Englishman, but always there is a certain personal consciousness, a burden of responsibility, whether the burden of his own health or the burden of ruling a province. So the Scandinavian influence in England has not been merely local, it has penetrated the national character. There has been no English King with a finer political genius than the Dane Canute, and the spirit of the North-man, with his grave sense of responsi-

bility, primarily to himself rather than to others,—the sense of Shakespeare's injunction, "To thine own self be true," and the spirit of Ibsen's hero, who felt that he was most strong when most alone,—seems specially associated with the Danish element in the English. Even the plastic force of the Scandinavian tongue has had its marked influence on the structure of the English language, in its simple, concise, direct force, if not in the delicious ripple, as of a wavelet of the sea, which sorts so well with Scandinavian speech and is so remote from the speech of Germanic tongues.

The last great invasion was that of the Normans. It was the most fatefully decisive of all and set the final seal on the genius of England. The Norman was ultimately of the same stock as the North-men of the preceding wave of invasion. It was that fact which gave so much significance to the Norman Conquest of England. Of all the Norman conquests in Europe, as Freeman pointed out, that of England alone proved permanently effective, and the reason was that only in England were they on a soil over which their own seed had already been plentifully sprinkled. Here alone their potent genius could work on congenial elements and achieve permanent results. Yet the Normans' task of invasion was harder than any that went before, needing all the energies of the great general and consummate administrator who achieved it.

Every fresh invader of England had added to the strength of England. After the Norman Conquest, no further conquest seems to have been found possible. England had become what later the French Ambassador to Charles II found it to be, "one vast citadel." The Great Armada, which the world-empire of Spain sent against England, merely served to strew the coast with wrecks, as the Duke of Würtemberg noted twenty years later; the great expedition of Napoleon never even left the would-be invader's harbors; and the attempts of the Germans today to attack England have only been rendered possible by the cultivation of extreme rapidity in flight. The Normans, it must be remembered, were the most vigorous race of their time. Concentrated centripetal force in combination with explosive centrifugal force—the aptitude to acquire and the aptitude to expand—in them reached maximum intensity. They represented the finest flower of strong northern individuality developed in the favorable soil of the orderly Latin civilization of France.

They were, as they remain in France today, narrowly acquisitive, but at the same time they shrank before no extravagance. In all things excessive, as their own ancient chronicler noted, they infused something of that excessiveness into the composite English blood. Yet they were no longer pirates. They were trained in warfare and government; they knew how to found principalities and kingdoms even in the far Mediterranean. They cultivated the arts with daring and brilliant success, and they had a passion for law, even to the extent of contentiousness. Their primitive energy of ruthlessness had become transformed into a genius for organization and an instinct for just, if severe, administration. "A beast, but a just beast," was the school-boy's verdict on Archbishop Temple as schoolmaster; it has, rightly or wrongly, often been the verdict of the subject races in the East who have come upon this old Norman trait in their English rulers. Justice has been the chief secret of the mystery, as it has seemed to some, of the stability of English government at home and abroad, although it has often been but slowly and painfully achieved. It has indeed been said, truly or not, that justice is as peculiarly the trait of the English as reason is of the French or pity of the Russians.

The extent and the significance of the Norman invasion of England has sometimes been underestimated. When we enter the little church of Dives, in Normandy, from which William sailed, and read the list of his companions there inscribed, it may seem to us that we are only in the presence of a select body of great paladins whose influence on the national composition and character could scarcely have been great. The evidence of place-names and the more dubious evidence of family names in England seems to tell a different story. The wave of Norman migration, moreover, continued for a century after the Conqueror's arrival. The Norman and other French elements which thus came over were necessarily less highly selected than the Conqueror's companions, but must have mightily reinforced their influence. The main evidence for the strength of Norman influence in England is written in the course of English history. However well compact the varied elements of the English people may be, and, in so far as they are not compact, however well they may supplement each other, it is throughout the Norman spirit which has dominated England and largely directed English

policy in the world. It is the Norman aristocratic dominance, Norman orderliness, Norman administrative energy, which have formulated the English oligarchic constitution and controlled the growth of English dominion in every quarter of the globe.

With the Norman invasion the elements of the English character were all brought together. Nothing further was needed but their permeation and elaboration, their slow development to self-consciousness. There have been minor infusions of new blood since, but these have merely served to reinforce elements already existing. Though small in amount, these later migrations have been precious in quality, for they have been attracted by that spirit of freedom and toleration in England which has offered a home to the finest-spirited refugees from neighboring lands. Thus it was that England accepted the Germans and Dutch, liberated the Jews, admitted numerous groups of artisans from Flanders who brought both their skill in handicraft and their sturdy independence to enrich the land of their adoption, and welcomed the French Huguenots, who, in the congenial English soil, were free so to develop their high intelligence and lofty character as to take rank among the most typical representatives of the English genius.

The genius of England, the special mark of the higher cultural activities of the nation, has been conditioned in part by the nature of the selectional process through which the country has been populated in successive waves of invasion, and in part by the varying character of the peoples thus introduced.

The result has been that, notwithstanding a slow process of mixture, the east coast of the British Islands has in every field of activity represented one aspect of the English spirit, while the west coast has represented a different and even opposed aspect of that same spirit. The purer representatives on each side have in this way contributed to the vitality of the English genius by opposing and supplementing each other, while the close connection between the two coasts has rendered possible racial blendings which have produced complete and typical representatives of that genius. There are numerous focal spots of genius in the British Islands, each with its own slightly varying characteristics, which we may, perhaps, trace back to the mediæval days when the composite character of the race and its attitude of jealous civil

individualism caused Isle of Wight people to describe Hampshire people as "foreigners," and English towns to display as much hostility to other English towns as though, it has been said, they were in Normandy or Flanders. Such minor variations cannot, however, obscure the wider outlines of the picture presented by English genius.

This complementary opposition, and this racial blending to produce in one individual the union of the two opposites, is seen through the whole of English genius. It is a fascinating task to attempt to trace it out in different fields and to note the varying balance of genius in each field taken separately, for, as we might expect, the method of expression most successfully attained is not the same on both sides.¹

There are indeed some forms of human activity for which there can scarcely fail to be some degree of aptitude in every region and every race. That is, for instance, the case in politics. Leaders in politics have arisen in all parts of the British Islands. At the same time they have always, to a remarkable extent, retained the impress of their race. This remains as true as ever, and among the British political leaders of today it is easy to observe how each expresses his own racial tendencies and his own personal heredity. In no field, indeed, is race seen to predominate over environment more clearly than in political genius. That is sometimes, indeed, a factor in political success. Parnell, with his haughty Anglo-Saxon reserve and shyness, his methodical subterranean tenacity, could win from his Irish Nationalist followers a loyalty they could scarcely have yielded to any purely Celtic leader. Disraeli, with his hard brilliance and dazzling Oriental imagination, an adventurer escaped from the Arabian Nights, still attracts, from the most conservative section of Anglo-Saxon England, a degree of sentimental affection never vouchsafed to Salisbury, the genuine and admirable personification of conservative England, and Lloyd George, the complete Celtic Welshman, and as such a natural object of suspicion and hostility to the Anglo-Saxon, is yet able to exert a magic influence over the Anglo-Saxon mind. The really dominating figures in the history of English politics can scarcely be said, however, to belong either to the extreme east or the extreme west. They are intermediate, a mixed

¹ It may be mentioned that I have dealt in detail with the distribution of English genius in my *Study of British Genius*.

race, or else originating in such a district as East Anglia, where the eastern spirit has been specially permeated by modifying influences. Gladstone was of such mixed stocks, as was before him a yet greater Englishman, Oliver Cromwell, and the Pitts, ancestrally spread over various parts of the British Isles, were connected, one may surmise, with the most aboriginal elements of the English people, while the peculiarly typical figure of John Hampden was ancestrally rooted in the Buckinghamshire hills and forests, which have never been thoroughly Anglo-Saxonized. Religion also, like politics, is universal in its appeal, and all parts of the British Islands have produced men of religion, who have displayed one or other of the special characteristics—militant aggressiveness or practical benevolence or orderly ecclesiasticism—which belong to British religion.

In another kind of aptitude, which we might expect to find evenly distributed in a marine citadel, there has been a remarkable tendency to division of labor. Great soldiers belong to the west and great sailors to the east. It is significant that Wellington, the representative English general, came from Ireland, and Nelson, the representative British admiral, from Norfolk. Ireland, Wales and the Welsh Marshes, the Scotch Highlands, Cornwall, with the whole southwestern peninsula (though this last region has been also a region of great sailors), have given England the largest proportion of her soldiers and her generals, and all these regions are largely Celtic. The whole eastern and southern coasts have produced great sailors, especially those parts of it where the population is fairest, so that distinguished sailors have been, in a large proportion, blue-eyed. This is a differentiation which seems more marked during recent centuries than it was at the outset of English history, before national feeling had unified Great Britain. It is possible that the military aptitude which through Plantagenet and even Tudor times we seem to find widely diffused in England has become largely transmuted into legal and administrative aptitude. Distinguished lawyers have often come from the northern part of east England, and great administrators from the neighboring regions of East Anglia, to which both of the two chief builders of modern Egypt ancestrally belong, Lord Cromer and Lord Kitchener, though the latter was more immediately connected with Ireland.

It is when we turn to the arts that we may read in most precise detail the racial characteristics of English genius. Thus, in dramatic aptitude, we find in the British Islands, as in Europe generally, that the fair, blue-eyed population very rarely achieve success. Ireland, Wales, and the English southwestern peninsula, have furnished England with actors and actresses; perhaps not one of high eminence has been derived elsewhere. Blue eyes, except in combination with dark hair (which is a Celtic characteristic), one scarcely sees among them. The slow reserved phlegmatic temperament of the Anglo-Saxon is rebellious to dramatic expression. The Celtic qualities, on the other hand, of vivacity, mental alertness, receptivity, and obvious charm, naturally lend themselves to the players' art. They are also qualities that we commonly consider feminine, and it may not be an accident that when we put aside the stage, on which the actress may even outshine the actor, feminine ability, in a numerical estimation of British genius, occupies a relatively larger place in Ireland than in any other region of the British Islands.

The racial opposition of east and west in the British Islands is admirably revealed in English painting. It may indeed be said that nothing shows so infallibly as English painting how profound, and how delicate, yet how unconscious, are the roots of heredity in the English character. The people of the west, as we know, are idealistic, visionary, imaginative; they possess the sense of magic; they worship their own dreams. The people of the east, as we also know, are born naturalists; they are enamored of reality; they find beauty not in their own visions, but by patiently watching the actual world; they worship Nature. Every English painter has been true to one or other of these deep impulses, however ignorant of it he may have been; it is not easy to find any exception. Reynolds belongs to the west as inevitably as Gainsborough belongs to the east. We could not imagine Richard Wilson in Norfolk or Crome in Wales. Burne-Jones is as emphatically Welsh, the man of the *Mabinogion*, as Constable expresses the whole soul of Suffolk. Throughout we see this radical opposition of temperament between the men of the dark west and of the fair east or north, the men who follow the vision within and the men who brood over the vision of Nature. There is, indeed, one great English painter, perhaps the supreme English painter,

whom we cannot clearly place in the one class or in the other, for he seems to belong to both. In Turner we see the faithful realist forever ruthlessly on the track of Nature to catch every subtlest variation of her mood; we also see the extravagant idealist embodying the inner vision of a loveliness never before made visible on the earth; we see them both, moreover, at the same moment. If we investigate Turner's ancestry, we find, as we might expect, that, while on his father's side he belonged to the west, he seems on his mother's side, so far as any evidence exists, to belong to the east. Herein is manifested that vital conflict between contradictory elements which, in the white heat of their fusion, have produced the finest achievements of the English genius.

It is in literature that we may most reasonably expect to read the spirit of a people, and to discern clearly every shade of its racial admixture. In this field the evidence is inexhaustible; the most delicate variations in racial quality, and the strongest contrasts are instinctively expressed by the man who possesses the art to write out of his own nature. The very medium which English writers have been compelled to use, the English language, is a reflexion of the compounded, varied, and tempered nature of the British people, and has thus powerfully aided English literary expression. At the outset, the west, with its more ancient and refined culture, takes precedence of the east. The Welsh *Mabinogion* and the Irish hero tales, with their beautifully embroidered imaginative extravagance, remain today far more attractive than the baldly crude narratives of *Beowulf* or *Havelok*, however sincere their simple and intense humanity. For an adequately artistic embodiment, on the primitive heroic basis, of this eastern spirit, we must go to Normandy, to the *Chanson de Roland*, unless, indeed, the final embodiment of that song which Taillefer sang at Hastings took place—as some authorities have supposed—in England. The east, or we may rather say the north, became splendidly fused with the west in the earliest of great English prose books, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. Here we see the Anglo-Saxon mind working on the Celto-Welsh stories, so that their variegated tapestry, by force of the emotional human intensity and ethical fervor thus infused, throbs with a poignant inner life. The whole course of English literature is thus typified at the outset in these two tendencies, and in the possibility

of their union in a higher manifestation of radiant beauty and thrilling force.

Such blending on the grand scale is necessarily rare. The contrasting opposites are more easily met. Crabbe in Suffolk represents the concentrated and unmixed Anglo-Saxon spirit as certainly as Coleridge and Keats reveal the English southwestern peninsula still touched by ancient Celtic glamour. Sir Thomas Browne belonged, like Crabbe, to East Anglia, but in him we hear insistently the magic note of the west, the same note that we hear in Traherne, for Browne was attached by ancestry to the half Welsh county of Cheshire. Everywhere we see that what is in the blood will come out in the spirit and that the subtlest variations of a man's outlook on the world were determined long centuries before he was born.

It would be surprising if Shakespeare, the supreme glory of English literature, were an exception to the rule that English art is the exact reflection of the complex racial elements that make up the English people and the English spirit. In Shakespeare the west and the east, the Celt and the Anglo-Saxon, were fused together with unique and scarcely analysable felicity. Warwickshire is not only, as has often been pointed out, the heart of England, it also represents anthropologically an infolding of the darker people of the west among the fairer Angles, and in thus an admirable center for a slow and complete process of racial mixture. In surveying Shakespeare's work we may indeed be inclined to think that its Celtic qualities outweigh the Anglo-Saxon. All this vivacity and quick wit, this vivid perception of the sensory aspects of the world, this gay extravagance, this art of weaving a brilliant and variegated tapestry of words, all this is Celtic. Here we are in the world of Cuchullian and the *Mabinogion*. Yet even when Shakespeare is most Celtic he is still also Anglo-Saxon. From this point of view Mercutio and Falstaff are technically interesting, for here we see the Celtic spirit with delightful effect playing through solid fleshy energetic Anglo-Saxon figures. But such figures are merely the by-play of Shakespeare's composite genius. The Anglo-Saxon in him is really fundamental; he is Norse, even Norman, in his oligarchic sympathies, in his fundamental instinct for personal independence and personal responsibility, in the profound melancholy from which his gaiety exhales. In his most visionary outlook he is still on

the solid ground of human emotion at its most poignant degree of concentrated intensity. It is from the sharp conflict, the explosive union, of these two elements of the west and of the east, that the flaming splendor of *Lear* proceeds. We may even say that the Anglo-Saxon spirit is the primary element in Shakespeare's character, for we seem to find it almost unmixed in the youthful *Venus and Adonis*, even in the Sonnets, while the Celtic spirit was never more prominent than at the end of his life in *The Tempest*. It is by the vital opposition of these two conflicting elements in the English nation, by the magnificent effect which their fusion may yield, that Shakespeare is in the end so absolutely and completely English. No Englishman of real life ever fully embodied the characteristics of Shakespeare; yet Shakespeare is all England.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.